



EAP Matters

Tips for Healthy Intimate Relationships

“Love never dies a natural death. It dies because we don’t know how to replenish its source.”
- Anais Nin

- ♥ **Be responsible for your own happiness.** Contrary to what is suggested in Disney princess movies and romantic comedies, your partner cannot make you happy. If you're not happy, instead of looking to what your spouse is doing or not doing, look inside for the source of your discontent. Maybe you worry often, are very critical of yourself or tend to not be grateful for what you have. (However, if you're dealing with abuse or addiction issues, it is best to seek professional help).
- ♥ **During the work week, spend one-on-one time together daily.** It is recommended that couples find at least 15 to 30 minutes daily to have quality, one-on-one time. It is necessary to have regular couple time to stay connected and feel special to one another. In addition, have date nights at least once a month. You don't even have to go out, if the funds aren't available. If you have children, find someone who can watch them for a few hours. Weekend trips once or twice a year can keep couples feeling good about their relationship. Doing new things together is a powerful way to keep a relationship exciting.
- ♥ **Show your love regularly.** An unexpected hug or kiss, saying “I love you”, and offering to do a task your partner usually does are all ways to express your love on a daily basis. Barton Goldsmith, PhD., in his book *Emotional Fitness for Couples*, suggests each partner make a list of acts that make he or she feel loved and cared for, such as a backrub or breakfast in bed. Exchange your lists and then make a commitment to do one thing from the list each week.
- ♥ **Check your expectations.** Certainly, we may want our partner to be there for us all the time, to love us unconditionally, to want sex when we want it, and to always be in a good mood. But when these become expectations, we are in trouble. When our expectations are not fulfilled, we become angry, hurt and resentful. Ask yourself if your expectations are realistic. Ask yourself: “Do I always do the things I'm expecting from my partner?”
- ♥ **Communicate clearly and respectfully.** Open and honest communication is necessary for relationships to survive long-term. However, due to lack of knowledge of how to communicate effectively and fears of being misunderstood, not heard or rejected, communication is a problem for some couples. The first step is to know what is bothering you and why and what change you think would solve your upset. The next step is to communicate your feelings, needs and thoughts clearly and without attacking or blaming. Communication also involves active listening. We need to free our mind of distractions and our own thoughts, and truly listen to our partners.

If you have concerns about your relationship, **Alegent Creighton Health EAP** is here to help you with building and maintaining a healthy, happy relationship.

Please contact us at (402)398-5566 or 1-800-847-4975